

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8861

S E C R E T ATHENS 3843

NODIS

E.O. 11652: DS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO BITSIOS FROM THE SECRETARY

REF: SECTO 01134

1. I MET PRIVATELY THIS MORNING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS AND READ TO HIM THE SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE CONTAINED REFTEL. BITSIOS LISTENED CAREFULLY, TOOK NOTES AND EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION. HE SAID THAT THE VIEWS AND ASSESSMENT CONTAINED IN THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE SQUARED WITH HIS OWN ANALYSIS AT THE MOMENT. HE ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER DETAILS CONCERNING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO ANKARA, AND I SAID THAT THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO HIM APPARENTLY HAD BEEN PREPARED AND DESPATCHED FROM THE SECRETARY'S AIRCRAFT ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE U.S. LAST NIGHT, AND SAID I THOUGHT THAT HE AND THE SECRETARY COULD DISCUSS THE SUBJECT FURTHER AND IN GREATER DETAIL WHEN THEY MET IN BRUSSELS NEXT THURSDAY. BITSIOS INDICATED THAT THIS WOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO HIM. (COMMENT: DEPENDING ON HOW THE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT FORD AND CARAMANLIS GOES NEXT THURSDAY MORNING AND HOW MUCH DETAIL THEY ARE ABLE TO DISCUSS, I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF BITSIOS REQUESTED A SECOND PRIVATE MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY - IF TIME IS AVAILABLE - AT SOME LATER POINT WHILE THEY ARE BOTH STILL IN BRUSSELS.) AS OF NOW, I UNDERSTAND THAT CARAMANLIS AND BITSIOS PLAN TO ARRIVE IN BRUSSELS WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 28, DIRECT FROM

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BUCHAREST, AND TO REMAIN IN BRUSSELS UNTIL LATE SATURDAY,

MAY 31 BEFORE RETURNING TO ATHENS.

2. I RECONFIRMED WITH BITSIOS THAT CARAMANLIS' MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WOULD TAKE PLACE THURSDAY MORNING, MAY 29 FROM 0930 TO 1045 IN THE RESIDENCE OF AMBASSADOR FIRESTONE. I TOLD HIM (IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTO 01068) THAT THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN AS NOTE TAKER, AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CROSSING WITH DEMIREL AT AMBASSADOR'S FIRESTONE'S RESIDENCE. BITSIOS SAID THAT CARAMANLIS HAD INDICATED THAT HE WANTED ONLY BITSIOS AND MOLYVIATIS TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE MEETING; HOWEVER, BITSIOS SAID THAT CARAMANLIS MIGHT DECIDE AT THE LAST MINUTE TO USE MOLYVIATIS EXCLUSIVELY AS AN INTERPRETER AND THEREFORE HE (BITSIOS) PLANNED TO TAKE ALONG A MEMBER OF HIS OWN STAFF AS A POTENTIAL NOTETAKER, IF THAT BECAME NECESSARY. BITSIOS SAID THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER A FOURTH GREEK OFFICIAL WOULD BE TAKEN INTO THE MEETING WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE MADE UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE, DEPENDING ON CARAMANLIS' WISHES, AND THAT THE U.S. SIDE MIGHT WISH TO HAVE A FOURTH PERSON STANDING BY IF DESIRED.

3. BITSIOS SAID THAT TWO NEWSPAPER REPORTS HAD COME TO HIS ATTENTION ON WHICH HE INTENDED TO SEEK "CLARIFICATION" FROM THE SECRETARY WHEN HE SAW HIM IN BRUSSELS:
A) ACCORDING TO AN AP DESPATCH FROM ANKARA YESTERDAY AN "AMERICAN OFFICIAL" IN THE "ENTOURAGE" OF SECTY KISSINGER SAID IN ANKARA THAT IF SOLUTIONS COULD NOT BE FOUND TO THE PROBLEMS OF CYPRUS AND THE AEGEAN, THERE COULD BE A WAR BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY "PERHAPS AS EARLY AS THIS SUMMER." THIS MONING'S (SATURDAY) PRESS IN ATHENS GIVES MAJOR HEADLINE PLAY TO THIS STORY (BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL). BITSIOS SAID THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED A NUMBER OF REPORTS - MOSTLY FROM "JOURNALISTIC SOURCES" - THAT TURKEY WAS PLANNING AN ATTACK ON GREEK ISLANDS IN THE AEGEAN IN LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY. NATURALLY, HE SAID, GREEK OFFICIALS HAD TREATED THESE REPORTS WITH GREAT SERIOUSNESS AND HAVE DONE THEIR UTMOST TO TRY AND ASCERTAIN THE FACTS. BITSIOS SAID THAT THE GOG HAD UNCOVERED NO EVIDENCE THAT TURKEY

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WAS PLANNING SUCH AN ATTACK AND IF THE USG HAD SUCH INFORMATION THE GREEK GOVERNMENT NATURALLY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED. AT THE SAME TIME, IF THIS WERE MERELY SPECULATION ON THE PART OF AMERICAN OFFICIALS, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD APPRECIATE OUR REFRAINING FROM COMMENTING ON THE MATTER TO THE PRESS. BITSIOS SAID THAT, AS WE KNEW SUCH SCARE HEADLINES AFFECTED THE GREEK STOCKMARKET, LED TO RAPID DRAWDOWNS OF BANK DEPOSITS, AND HAD A GENERALLY

BAD EFFECT ON THE TOURIST INDUSTRY WHICH WAS SO IMPORTANT TO GREECE. I SAID I HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY AMERICAN OFFICIAL MAKING SUCH COMMENTS TO THE PRESS BUT WOULD, OF COURSE, REPORT HIS CONCERN TO WASHINGTON.

B) BITSIOS THEN SHOWED ME A TELEGRAM HE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE GREEK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON REFERRING TO A STORY WHICH HAD APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON STAR NEWS OF MAY 22. IN THAT STORY, ACCORDING TO HIS TELEGRAM, IT WAS ALLEGED THAT THE SECRETARY SUPPORTED A SETTLEMENT ON CYPRUS WITH "SEPARATE GREEK AND TURKEY STATES JOINED IN SOME KIND OF CONFEDERATION", WHICH IS THE ARRANGEMENT THE TURKS FAVOR. BITSIOS SAID THAT HE DID NOT "WANT TO BELIEVE" THAT THE SECRETARY HAD EXPRESSED HIMSELF ALONG THESE LINES OR, INDEED, REALLY FELT THAT WAY. HE SAID HE INTENDED TO QUERY THE SECRETARY ON THIS POINT IN BRUSSELS. I TOLD BITSIOS THAT AS HE KNEW THE SECRETARY CONSISTENTLY REFRAINED FROM ADVOCATING ANY PARTICULAR KIND OF SETTLEMENT OR PLAN FOR CYPRUS AND THAT I FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE SECRETARY WAS TAKING ANY POSITION ON THIS PARTICULAR POINT AT THIS TIME.

4. BITSIOS ONCE AGAIN ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS THANKS TO THE SECRETARY FOR SENDING HIM A MESSAGE SO PROMPTLY FOLLOWING HIS DEPARTURE FROM ANKARA AND SAID TO TELL THE SECRETARY THAT HE WAS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR IMPORTANT MEETING IN BRUSSELS NEXT THURSDAY MORNING.
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